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21 July 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: TCO Recipients of Attachments to 
 (Briefing Notes)

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SUBJECT : Change in Dissemination Restriction

Dissemination caveat of above cited briefing notes should
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POSSIBLE CHINESE MILITARY ACTIVITY
NORTH VIETNAM

1. SIGNIFICANCE:

THIS BRIEFING BOARD DEPICTS MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTH VIETNAM
NEAR THE CHINA BORDER WHICH APPEARS TO BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH
CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY FORCES IN THE BORDER AREA OF SOUTH CHINA.
STRENGTHENING THE POSSIBILITY OF CHINESE GROUND FORCES' INVOLVEMENT
IN NORTH VIETNAM IS THE SIMILARITY OF THIS ACTIVITY TO CHINESE
MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTH KOREA IN 1952.

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HA NOI REGIME.

THERE APPEAR TO BE NINE MAJOR CHINESE UNITS IN NORTH VIETNAM, ALL OF DIVISION SIZE. THESE UNITS ARE EITHER KNOWN OR SUSPECT ENGINEER UNITS OR AAA UNITS. THE ENGINEER UNITS ARE THE 2ND RAILWAY ENGINEER DIVISION, THE THREE SUSPECT ENGINEER DIVISION UNDER THE CONSTRUCTION HEADQUARTERS AT BAO HA, AND A NEW UNIT THAT DEPLOYED FROM CHINA TO THE HA NOI AREA IN LATE DECEMBER. THE AAA UNITS APPEAR TO BE THE ONLY TACTICAL CHINESE FORMATIONS IDENTIFIED THUS FAR IN NORTH VIETNAM.

THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE CHINESE MAY BE PUTTING IN A MAJOR EFFORT ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION IN THE NORTHERN BORDER AREA. THE ACTIVITY CONSISTS OF ROADBED IMPROVEMENT, REALIGNMENT, NEW ROAD DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF DISPERSED MILITARY CAMPS AND STORAGE FACILITIES.

SOME OF THIS WORK WAS BEGUN IN EARLY 1965, MAINLY IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE BORDER. IT IS BEING CARRIED OUT AT A MODERATE BUT SUSTAINED RATE. A SIMILARITY IN THE LAYOUT OF THE WORK CAMPS ALONG THE CONSTRUCTION SITES TO THOSE IN YUN-NAN PROVINCE, PLUS THE GENERAL SOUTHWARD DEVELOPMENT OF THIS NETWORK, SUGGESTS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY CHINESE CONSTRUCTION CREWS.

SINCE EARLY 1966 SOME THIRTY-FIVE DISPERSED STORAGE FACILITIES AND MILITARY CAMPS HAVE BEEN BUILT ALONG THE IMPROVED ROAD SYSTEM

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IN THE LAI CHAU AREA. THE PURPOSE OF THESE AND OTHER SIMILAR FACILITIES REMAIN UNDETERMINED. THEIR APPEARANCE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SOUTHWARD DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROAD AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM FROM CHINA, SUGGESTS THAT THEY MAY BE RELATED TO CHINESE MILITARY CONTINGENCY NEEDS. THERE CAN BE LITTLE QUESTION BUT THAT THESE FACILITIES WILL PROVIDE THE CHINESE WITH IMPROVED ACCESS TO NORTH VIETNAM AND NORTHERN LAOS.¹

3. MISSION READOUT:

A DETAILED STUDY OF SELECTED FRAMES FROM

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(FIRST TWO MISSIONS NOT SHOWN ON GRAPHIC) REVEALS SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTH VIETNAM WHICH APPEARS TO BE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH CHINESE MILITARY FORCES IN THE BORDER AREA OF SOUTH CHINA. ITEMS OF PRIMARY INTEREST INCLUDE TWO AREA IN NORTH VIETNAM (CAO BANG AND LAO CAI) CONTAINING BUILDINGS OF A TYPE ASSOCIATED WITH MILITARY FACILITIES IN SOUTH CHINA, AND A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN DISPERSED STORAGE BUILDINGS, BUNKERS, MOTOR PARKS AND ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT IN NORTHERN NORTH VIETNAM. THE PROXIMITY OF THIS ACTIVITY TO THE CHINA BORDER, ITS LOCATION ON ROADS WHICH CROSS THE BORDER, AND THE SIMILARITY OF BUILDING STRUCTURE ASSOCIATED WITH MILITARY FACILITIES IN CHINA AND NORTH KOREA ALL INDICATE POSSIBLE CHINESE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTH VIETNAM.

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THE SIGNIFICANT FEATURE WHICH LINKS THIS ACTIVITY TO THE CHINESE IS THE PRESENCE OF LONG BUILDINGS IN THE CAO BANG AND LAO CAI AREAS OF NORTH VIETNAM. THESE BUILDINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-FOUR FEET IN LENGTH AND THIRTY-THREE FEET IN WIDTH, HAVE A SHORTER ASSOCIATED BUILDING AT ONE END. BUILDINGS OF THE SAME GENERAL SIZE AND FEATURES ARE OBSERVED AT THE PING-HSIANG STORAGE AREA (2207N 10650E) AND AT THE A-TA-CHIN ARMY BARRACKS AL 1 (4358N 08050E) IN CHINA. (THE LATTER DOES NOT APPEAR ON GRAPHIC). ADDITIONAL INDICATORS ASSOCIATING THIS TYPE OF LONG BUILDING WITH CHINESE MILITARY ACTIVITY ARE THE SIMILAR LONG STRUCTURES OBSERVED IN CONJUNCTION WITH CHINESE SUPPORT FORCES IN NORTH KOREA IN 1952².

4. NOTE:

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SEE NPIC BRIEFING BOARDS [REDACTED]

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²USAF PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION KEY - TROOP TARGETS - ACS/IM 200-44,
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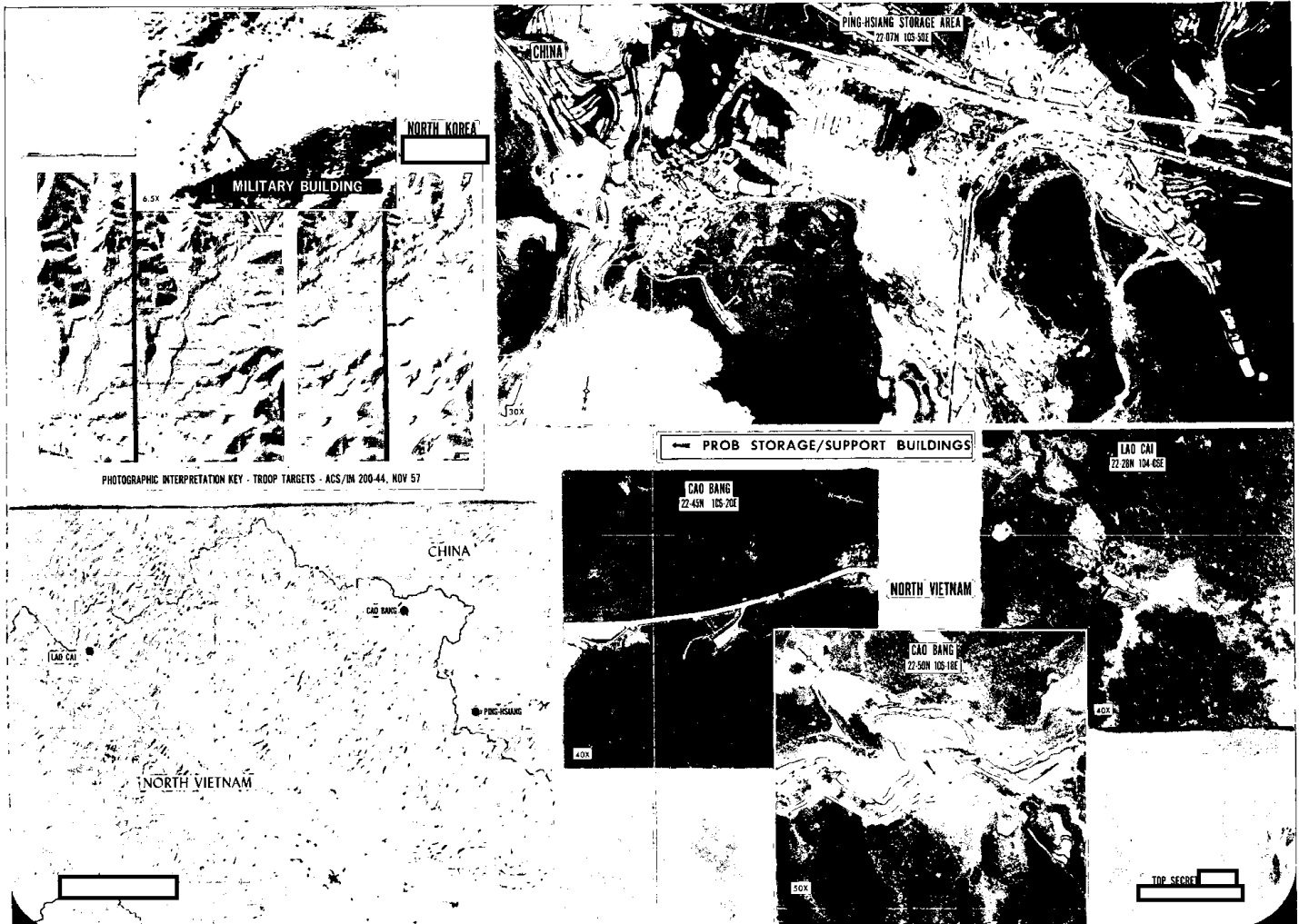
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